

SOIL CONSERVATION

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Society and the Farmer Have Mutual Interests in the Land

By M. L. Wilson, Under Secretary of Agriculture

I HAVE been asked to tell something of my faith in the soil conservation districts laws as instruments to enable farmers and society to attack the soil erosion problem cooperatively. In my opinion, these laws, which permit farmers to work together and with public agencies to arrest soil blowing and soil washing, are important milestones in the national conservation program.

Nowadays it is generally realized, or perhaps I should say, it is becoming generally realized, that society and the farmer have a mutual interest in the land. It was not always so. In the early days of our history, during the settlement years when there was plenty of free land, this mutual interest in the land and its conservation was fully appreciated by only a few. Not many thought as did Patrick Henry who, early in our Nation's history, said: "He is the greatest patriot who stops the most gullies."

It was only natural during the years of rapid agricultural expansion that little thought should be given to the welfare of the land. During Colonial days no prophet dared to predict that a population of 3 millions of people confined to a narrow shelf of land along the Atlantic shore would swell to 130 millions in 150 years and reach to the Pacific. If there had been such a prophet he would not have been believed. It was natural then to look upon the land supply as being inexhaustible, like the air. It was also natural to look upon one's relationship to the land in a purely personal light. Whether one farmed well or whether one farmed poorly, one hardly felt that society held a stake in the result. It didn't seem to matter a great deal if

one farmed poorly and ruined a few acres of good land. There was always more land to the west.

This philosophy, born of plenty, held over long after Colonial times and early settlement days, and did not begin really to undergo great change until the supply of good lands began to dwindle. By the time the public domain was closed to homesteading a few years ago, it had, however, almost disappeared. Meanwhile a new concept of the farmer's and society's interest in the land has appeared and gained acceptance. Put very broadly, this new concept assumes that society has an interest in the privately owned farm which is at least equal to the interest of the owner himself. If this assumption is sound, and I believe that it is, obviously it throws new duties both upon the landowner and society. It becomes the duty of the landowner so to handle his land as to conserve the soil and its fertility in the interest of society, and it becomes the duty of society to assist the landowner to make the best use of his land. Thus the individual landowner and society share the responsibility of preserving our lands for the generations to come. But up to now, our efforts at sharing responsibility have been awkward and ineffectual. Society and the landowner have not been able to enter fully and freely into the partnership which is necessary if the responsibility of each is to be met. The mechanism for doing so has been lacking.

Now, however, a number of States have passed soil conservation districts laws which provide the means for close partnership and cooperation among farmers, ranchers, and society in order to control accelerated



Thorough understanding of what is proposed is a necessary preliminary.

erosion. Elsewhere in this issue of *SOIL CONSERVATION* Philip Glick describes the provisions of this State legislation. For this information I refer you to his article. I shall confine my remarks to the democratic nature of the processes for which the soil conservation districts legislation provides the mechanism.

The philosophy of democratic government revolves around the principle that the mass of the people is capable of governing. It is my conviction that a democracy, therefore, cannot be said to be succeeding unless the mass of the people participates in the affairs of government. Only their participation makes a democracy work. What I like about the districts legislation is that this principle is uppermost.

The soil-conservation districts laws place the responsibility for the initiative and management of a soil-conservation program upon local folk. To begin with, there is nothing mandatory in the laws about dividing a State into soil-conservation districts. Whether a district is to be formed rests entirely with the people who work the land. They express their decisions by petition and in referenda. They elect a majority of the supervisors, who are the chosen leaders of the district. They develop their own program. They are answerable to no other agency in the conduct of their program. Its reins are held tightly in the hands of local people. Should land-use regulations appear to be necessary, the decision to adopt them rests solely with the local supervisors, who,

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however, can proceed only with the approval of their neighbors, who again express themselves in a referendum. Should it appear necessary after 5 years to dissolve a district, the decision as to this rests also with local people, who again express themselves in a referendum. Every step in the procedure—in forming a district, in operating it, even in dissolving it—is surrounded by safeguards which assure that the things done in the local soil-conservation program are done only because a large majority of the local folk believe them sound and a benefit to their own and the community welfare.

So long as the work of the district is so firmly held in the hands of local people, as the procedures provided for in the State laws require, we need have little fear that any district will proceed with a program that is not based on common sense and is not generally subscribed to by the land occupiers within the boundaries of the district. I think this is particularly true of the provisions in the laws which permit farmers to draw up and vote land-use regulations upon themselves.

I am not sure that the phrase "land-use regulations" is the best name for this part of the erosion-control program. To some the word "regulations" may imply regimentation, and every paragraph in the various State laws is carefully drafted to avoid all possibility of regimentation. Democratic procedures are required in each step in forming and operating a district. To my ear "community soil-conservation laws" is a better phrase.

"Land-use regulations" really are the ordinances of the district, similar to the ordinances which every city, town, or county may adopt. Everyone is familiar with county weed-eradication laws, with city zoning ordinances, with town building codes, sanitary regulations, and the like. To these we are accustomed and have come to accept them and consider them as evidences of good housekeeping in government. There is nothing unreasonable about community laws for protecting drinking water, for example. Nor is there anything unreasonable about laws for protecting the land.

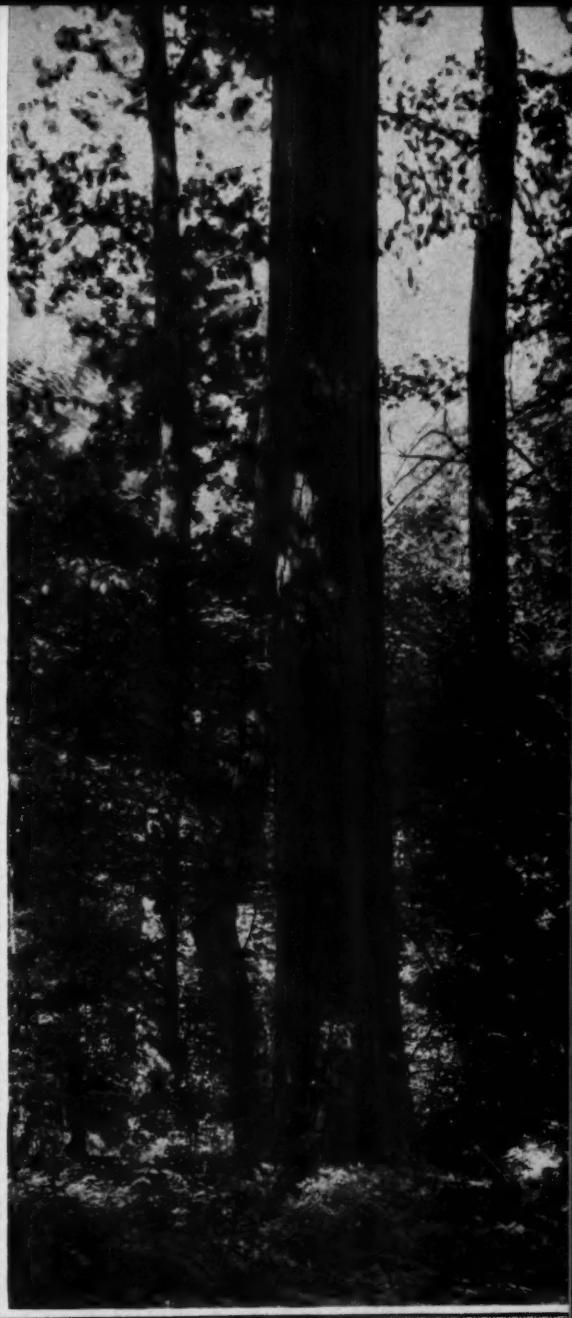
In my opinion, many districts will find it unnecessary to adopt any land-use regulations. You and I, who work with farm people, know that they don't want to see the land abused. The kind of people who live on the land like green fields. They like to harvest good crops. Such folk will be willing, as soon as the mechanism is provided, to work together and with society's agencies to assure that posterity will inherit green fields and forests rather than eroded hillsides and barren plains. But in many cases, reasonable land-use regulations may be needed to assure the adoption of essential measures to prevent the soil from washing and blowing away.

The American economy of today is maturing. Particularly is this true of agriculture. The pioneer stage of our development has made way for a second stage, one in which change among the elements occurs at relatively slower rates of speed, and in which greater stability for agriculture and greater stability among all of the members of the economic structure are regarded on all sides as desirable. The passage of soil conservation districts laws by 22 States since January 1, 1937, is strong evidence that the nature of the change is now popularly realized.

Into our present stage of agricultural history, the districts plan fits very neatly. The districts legislation in every paragraph recognizes that a change has occurred from a pioneer to a maturing economy. It offers a means of effecting land stability, of supporting the very foundation upon which our farming communities rest, and thus helps to stabilize society as a whole.

During the transition period to a mature economy, many adjustments must be made. We must discard many of the old points of view which led to an agricultural economy which has proved to be in discord with Nature, as abandoned farms, accelerated floods and dust storms testify. To realize that we must learn to work and live in harmony with Nature, and play the farming game according to Nature's rules, is in itself a long step forward.

(Continued on p. 143)



This noble pine symbolizes the dignity of intelligent land use.

State Legislation for Erosion Control



By Philip M. Glick¹

WHEN the Congress provided by law for the national erosion-control program of the Soil Conservation Service it recognized that the program of the Service cannot, by itself, solve the serious erosion problem. Section 3 of the Federal statute, as approved April 27, 1935, therefore authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to require the enactment of suitable supplementary State legislation as a condition to the expenditure of Federal funds for erosion-control operations in any State. It may be well to quote the relevant part of section 3 at this point. It is as follows:

Sec. 3. As a condition to the extending of any benefits under this act to any lands not owned or controlled by the United States or any of its agencies, the Secretary of Agriculture may, insofar as he may deem necessary for the purposes of this act, require (1) the enactment and reasonable safeguards, for the enforcement of State and local laws imposing suitable permanent restrictions on the use of such lands and otherwise providing for the prevention of soil erosion; . . .

The need for State legislation in this field arises out of the fact that the problem of erosion cannot be adequately solved by work in widely separated areas. Unless State legislation provides a mechanism by which farmers can organize themselves for cooperative action, to apply on their lands the erosion-control practices observed on the demonstration projects of the Soil Conservation Service, the full benefits of the Federal program cannot be realized. In a word, State legislation is needed to assure permanent results from the expenditure of Federal funds.

The Department of Agriculture has worked with representatives from a large number of States in preparing a standard statute which has come to be known as "The Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law." In February 1935, the President of the United States wrote to the 48 State governors, urging them to recommend to their respective State legislatures the adoption of legislation along the lines of the Standard Act. At the recent sessions of State legislatures, 22 States adopted legislation more or less along the lines of that Act.

It is the purpose of this article to state the basic provisions of the Standard Act and of the legislation modeled upon it and now in force in 22 States.

Section 2 of the Standard Act contains a list of legislative determinations and a declaration of legislative

policy. This section was drawn on the assumption that, despite all the discussion in recent years of the seriousness of the erosion problem, the basic facts are still too little known. In addition, it seeks to bring together these basic considerations in the statute, so that they may be readily available for the consideration of the legislatures deliberating on the bill and the courts who will be required to pass upon its constitutionality. Section 2 therefore recites that the consequences of soil erosion in the form of soil blowing and soil washing are as follows:

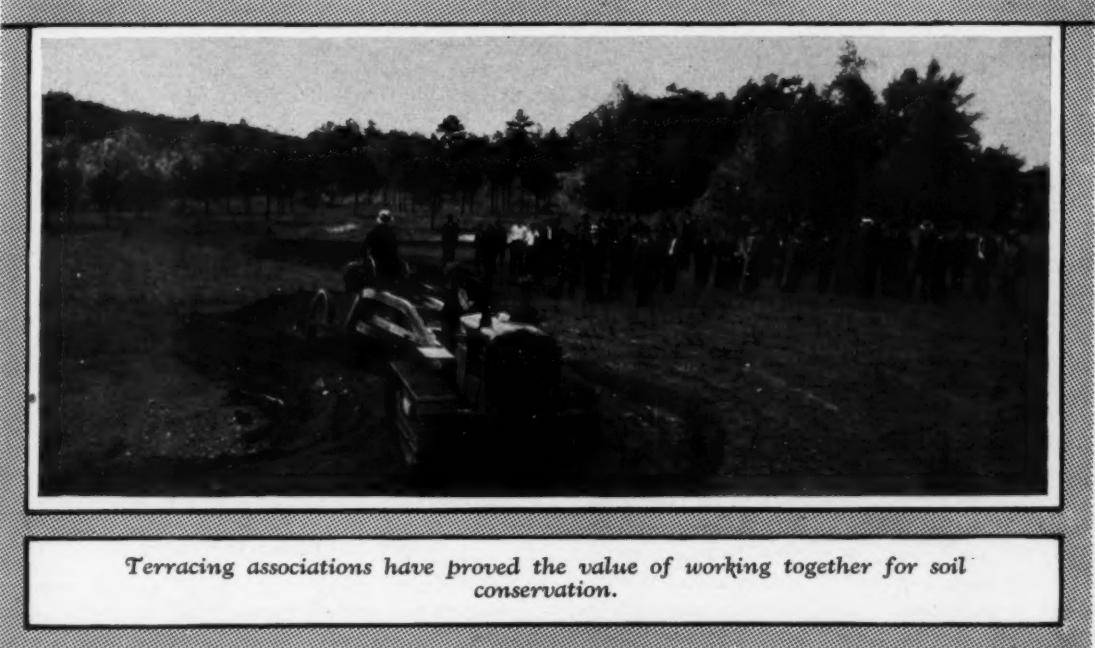
1. Silting and sedimentation of stream channels, reservoirs, dams, ditches, and harbors.
2. Loss of fertile soil material in dust storms.
3. Piling up of soil on lower slopes, and its deposit over alluvial plains.
4. Reduction in productivity or outright ruin of rich bottom lands by overwash of poor subsoil material, sand, and gravel swept out of the hills.
5. Deterioration of soil and its fertility, deterioration of crops grown thereon, and declining acre yields despite development of scientific processes for increasing such yields.
6. Loss of soil and water which causes destruction of food and cover for wildlife.
7. Blowing and washing of soil into streams which silts over spawning beds, and destroys water plants, diminishing the food supply of fish.
8. Diminishing of the underground water reserve, which causes water shortage, intensifies periods of drought, and causes crop failure.
9. Increase in the speed and volume of rainfall run-off, causing severe and increasing floods, which bring suffering, disease, and death.
10. Impoverishment of families attempting to farm eroding and eroded lands.
11. Damage to roads, highways, railways, farm buildings, and other property from floods and dust storms.
12. Losses in navigation, hydroelectric power, municipal water supply, irrigation developments, farming, and grazing.

Section 2 then adds that past experience and research have demonstrated that if soil resources are to be conserved and soil erosion is to be controlled and prevented, the following are among the corrective methods which should be adopted:

1. Carrying on engineering operations such as the construction of terraces, terrace outlets, check dams, dikes, ponds, ditches, etc.
2. Utilizing strip cropping, lister furrowing, contour cultivating, contour furrowing and land irrigation.
3. Seeding and planting of waste, sloping, abandoned, or eroded lands to water-conserving and erosion-preventing plants, trees, and grasses.

===== A VEHICLE FOR EROSION CONTROL =====

¹ Chief, Land Policy Division, Office of the Solicitor, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.



Terracing associations have proved the value of working together for soil conservation.

4. Forestation, reforestation, suitable crop rotation, retardation of run-off, and soil stabilization with trees, grasses, legumes, and other thick-growing, soil-holding crops.

5. Retirement from cultivation of steep, highly erodable areas and areas now badly gullied or otherwise eroded, to grass or trees.

What the Standard Act Provides

The Act provides, in essence, a procedure by which soil conservation districts may be organized—such districts to be governmental subdivisions of the State—to exercise two types of powers:

1. The power to establish and administer erosion-control projects and preventive measures, including assistance to farmers in controlling erosion on their lands.

2. The power to prescribe land-use regulations in the interest of the prevention and control of erosion, such regulations to be first submitted to local referendum and, if approved in the referendum, to have the force of law within the district.

The State Committee

The Act establishes a "State Soil-Conservation Committee" which has power to define the boundaries of each district, to encourage the organization of districts, to bring about an exchange of information and experience among the districts in the State, and to coordinate the several district programs "so far as this may be done by advice and consultation." Each district is an independent unit, and is not subject to the control of the State committee. The Act provides that the State committee shall have not less than three nor more

than five members, and that the following shall be its members: The State director of extension, the director of the State experiment station, and the State conservation commissioner or commissioner of agriculture, if there are such officers in the State. The committee is authorized to invite the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States to appoint one person to serve as a member of the committee.

How Districts are Organized

The procedure of organizing districts is as follows: Any 25 land occupiers may petition the State committee to establish a district. The act defines "land occupier" to include any person or corporation who holds title to or is in possession of lands, either as owner, lessee, renter, tenant, or otherwise. The committee is required to hold a public hearing on the petition, to define the boundaries of the proposed district, and then to submit to all land occupiers living within the boundaries defined the question as to whether or not the district should be created. No district may be established unless a majority of the votes cast in the referendum is in favor of such creation.

The District Supervisors

Each district is to be governed by a group of five supervisors, two of whom are to be appointed by the



committee, and three to be elected by the land occupiers of the district. Each supervisor, whether elected or appointed, holds office for 3 years. The supervisors are to receive no compensation other than expenses necessarily incurred. A paid staff may be provided for each district.

What the Districts May Do

When organized, each district will have power to perform research experiments in erosion control; to conduct demonstrational projects; to carry out preventive and control measures; to enter into contracts with farmers and give them financial and other assistance; to buy lands for retirement or for project purposes; to make loans and gifts of equipment, machinery, seeds, etc., to farmers; to take over and operate State and Federal erosion-control projects; and to recommend land-use plans for soil conservation. These powers can be carried out upon private lands only with the consent of the owner.

Land-Use Regulations Binding on All Lands

In addition to the above listed powers, the supervisors of each district may formulate an ordinance prescribing land-use regulations for soil conservation. Such regulations cannot go into effect, however, until after they have been submitted to a referendum of the land occupiers and have been approved in such referendum by a majority of the votes cast. The regulations may be amended or repealed, but only after such amendment or repeal has again been submitted to a referendum. These regulations may include provisions requiring engineering operations such as construction of terraces, check dams, etc.; requirements for particular methods of cultivation, such as contour cultivating, lister furrowing, strip cropping, planting of trees and grasses, etc.; specifications of cropping programs and tillage practices, including rotations; and requirements that steep or otherwise highly erodible land be retired from cultivation.

How Regulations are Enforced

Failure by land occupiers to observe the regulations is punishable by fine as a misdemeanor. In addition, the supervisors may file petition with the local courts asking the court to order the land occupier to observe

the regulations. Such court order may provide that if the land occupier fails to perform, the supervisors may go upon his lands, do the necessary work, and collect the costs from the land occupier.

Allowing Exceptions to the Regulations

In any district which adopts land-use regulations, the Act requires that a board of adjustment be established. Upon petition of the land occupier, the board of adjustment is authorized to permit variances from the land-use regulations in cases where application of the strict letter of the regulations would result in "great practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship." Decisions of the board of adjustment are subject to review in the local courts.

Districts are authorized to cooperate with one another, and all agencies of the State are directed to observe, on lands which they are administering, all applicable land-use regulations.

Discontinuance of Districts

After a district has been in existence for 5 years, land occupiers may petition for discontinuance of the district. The question of discontinuance must be submitted to a referendum after which the district will be wound up unless a majority of the votes cast are in favor of continuance.

Source of Funds for Districts

The Standard Act provides for an appropriation out of the State treasury to be divided among the districts by the State committee. In addition, it authorizes the districts to accept grants-in-aid from the Soil Conservation Service or other Federal agencies to supplement the State appropriation. The districts are not authorized to levy any taxes or special assessments or to issue bonds.

Basic Considerations Which Influenced the Drafting of the Act

The provisions of the Act are intended to satisfy the following requirements, which are considered fundamental:

1. A genuine attack on the erosion problem requires more than the construction of terraces and dams. Land-use practices and cropping programs must be adjusted in many cases.
2. Practically all the lands in particular watersheds must be brought under uniform control. Arbitrary boundary lines should be ignored and programs formulated over naturally bounded areas.
3. This program can be made effective only if farmers can be induced to cooperate voluntarily. The Act should, therefore, create machinery which the farmers can use when they are convinced that action is desirable. Some machinery should, however, be provided whereby a majority of the farmers may vote land-use regulations upon themselves and thereafter compel a recalcitrant minority to comply where it is for the public good.



4. The farmers must be able to feel that the program is largely in their own hands. The only way to bring about this feeling is to leave the program largely in their hands—hence the provisions for referendums and elections.

5. Because of the wide variance in conditions within a single State, land-use regulations must be formulated locally and must be flexible.

6. Where the results of land treatment increase the public welfare and social good the costs of the operations should not be thrown wholly upon the land owners.

It will be seen that the Standard Act will enable farmers in any area voluntarily to organize themselves into a district in order to apply on their lands the practices learned from State and Federal erosion-control demonstration projects. Complete power is reserved to the farmers to determine whether a district shall be organized, to elect a majority of the governing board, and to determine whether land-use regulations shall be adopted, and what such regulations shall provide.

Participation by "Land Occupiers"

It will have been noticed that the Standard Act provides for participation in the signing of petitions and in referenda and elections by all "land occupiers," rather than merely land owners. "Land occupier" is defined in the statute to include all land owners, as well as all those who are in possession of farm lands, as lessee, tenant, renter, or otherwise. This means that when any farm is owned by one man and operated by

another, both the owner and the operator participate in all stages of the program under the statute. This provision of the Standard Act springs from recognition of the fact that the understanding participation of all those who will be affected by programs under the Act must be secured. The landowner should, of course, be represented because his is the title to the land and because many of the costs will fall upon him. The lessee, tenant, renter, or other operator must also be represented. The burden of many of the operations, such as maintaining terraces, seeding on the contour, and other day-by-day farming practices all of which must be so carried on that they will not interfere with the control of erosion, will fall upon the man actually operating the farm. It is therefore believed that it would be a serious mistake to limit participation under the statute to landowners and to exclude all other land occupiers.

Recent Action by State Legislatures

Legislation, more or less along the lines of the Standard State Soil-Conservation Districts Law, was adopted during the recent sessions of State legislatures in the following 25 States: Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada,

New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin. The Governors of Texas and of Ohio vetoed the statutes in those States. Twenty-three States, therefore, now have legislation providing for erosion control in one form or another.



The statute adopted in Montana is sketchy, ambiguous, and unsatisfactory, and it is doubtful that much, if any, progress can be made under the present law. Interested people in Montana are considering submitting to the next State legislature amendments to bring the Montana law in line with the Standard Act. Minnesota and Nebraska have not made adequate provision for enforcement of land-use regulations, having omitted entirely the Standard Act procedure whereby district supervisors are able to go upon the land, perform the work, and collect the costs from the owner. Arkansas, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Wisconsin have required more than a majority vote for approval of land-use regulations in the referendum. A two-thirds vote has been required by most of those States, Nebraska and New Jersey requiring a three-fourths vote, Minnesota a vote of 85 percent of the land occupiers, and Kansas 90 percent. It is doubtful whether a provision requiring approval by 85 percent or 90 percent of the votes cast can be considered workable. Colorado is the only State which has abandoned the recommendation of the Standard Act on methods of financing operation of the districts by authorizing the districts to levy special assessments against the lands.

The 22 statutes (excluding Montana) now in force differ from the Standard Act in particulars other than those summarized above. It may be stated in general summary that the statutes now in force should be adequate for comprehensive erosion-control programs to be instituted in all but 5 or 6 of the States which have adopted legislation at the last sessions. At future legislative sessions in these latter States, the statutes may be amended. Similar legislation will be considered at future sessions of States which have not yet adopted such an act. There are indications that the campaign to have adequate erosion-control legislation adopted in each of the 48 States will go on.

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What a Typical District Will Be Like

Assume that the statute has been adopted in your State. How would farmers go about organizing a district, and what would such a district be like after it was organized?

First of all, nothing will be done until 25 land occupiers present a petition to the State committee asking it to organize a district. When such a petition has been presented, the State committee will hold a public hearing on the question and consider whether or not a district should be established and what should be its boundaries. If the committee decides that a district is needed, it will define the boundaries and give notice of a referendum to be held on the question of creation of the district. In the referendum all land occupiers may vote. If a majority vote against creation of the district, that ends the matter. If a majority vote in favor of creation of the district, the committee will appoint two supervisors for the district. The two supervisors will file an application for a charter with the Secretary of State. On issuance of the charter, the district comes into being.

There is then held an election in which the land occupiers will elect three more supervisors. The group of five supervisors will then make a study of the district and formulate a program of erosion-control projects and preventive measures. Erosion-control work may be done upon private lands only with consent of the land occupier, and upon public lands only under a cooperative agreement with the agency administering the lands. Funds to finance the projects will have been appropriated from the State treasury and may be supplemented by Federal grants-in-aid.

If the supervisors consider it desirable, they can formulate land-use regulations in the interest of erosion control. They will then have to hold a general referendum on the regulations. If a majority of the land occupiers voting in the referendum vote against the regulations, none can go into effect. If a majority approve the regulations, then they can be enacted into law. The regulations may require terracing, contour furrowing, strip cropping, and similar measures.

If a particular land occupier refuses to control erosion on his land in accordance with the regulations, and his lands are so situated that his refusal interferes with the control of erosion on other lands in the district, then the supervisors may file a petition with the local court asking the court to require that land occupier to live up to the regulations. The court may order him to perform and may authorize the supervisors to go upon his lands and do the work at his expense if he fails to obey the court order.

Sane pasture management will be encouraged under soil conservation districts.



If any land occupier feels that his lands are peculiarly situated so that unnecessary hardships result from applying the regulations to his lands, he may petition the Board of Adjustment to authorize a variance. From the action of the Board of Adjustment an appeal can be taken to the local courts.

After the district has been in existence for 5 years, land occupiers may petition the State committee to wind up the district. The question of continuance must be submitted to a referendum and the district may not be continued in existence unless a majority vote is cast in favor of continuing it.

Is the Standard Act Constitutional?

This is not the appropriate place for a discussion of the constitutional issues which may be raised to test the validity of State legislation of this type under the Federal and State constitutions. Readers interested in these problems, however, may note that the Solicitor for the Department of Agriculture issued an opinion

to the Secretary of Agriculture on February 26, 1936, discussing these constitutional issues. That opinion is printed in full in the pamphlet issued by the Department containing the text of the Standard Act. The pamphlet is entitled "A Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law."

The statutes adopted in 22 States are still too recent for a judgment as to action under the law. The various State committees are getting organized and are holding hearings and conducting referenda on petitions for organizing soil-conservation districts. The success of the program under these laws will depend, to no small extent, upon the capacity and the enthusiasm with which the respective State committees and district supervisors attack their problems.





The Next Step: Emphasis Shifts to the Districts Plan

By Dillon S. Myer¹

THIS year's action by the legislatures of 22 States in passing soil-conservation districts laws, patterned after the Standard Act recommended by the Department of Agriculture, is deeply significant to the Soil Conservation Service; first, because it opens the way for a greatly enlarged, and at the same time more intensive, national program of soil defense and, second, because it raises immediate questions concerning the work of the Service in relation to the expanded program.

The questions that are foremost, and which can be answered now, concern the part which the present demonstration program of the Service is to play in the broadened attack; and the form which Service participation will take as the national program enters the districts phase.

Up to the present time, activities of the Service have been confined for the most part to the introduction and application, in cooperation with individual farmers, of practical soil-conserving measures and practices to the lands within relatively small watershed demonstration areas. The watershed demonstration areas have played, and will continue to play for a number of years to come, a fundamental part in the development of a national program.

The demonstration program, however, has been only the first step in a large national program of soil and water conservation. Its purpose has been to introduce conservation measures and practices applicable to a large natural land-use region to a small area that represents as nearly as possible a "cross section" of the region, where they can be tested under actual operating conditions and studied in the light of their possible usefulness to the larger area.

Obviously, the demonstration program does not attempt to solve the problem of the region, it seeks only to point the way toward possible solution.

From the standpoint of national adequacy, effective soil conservation requires the intensive and coordinate treatment of all lands in every natural region of similar soil, slope, climatic, and type of farming characteristics, in accordance with their needs and adaptabilities. This cannot be achieved, naturally, by the intensive application of conservation measures

to the lands of a small group of farmers within boundaries of demonstration projects and camp areas. It requires the effective cooperation of many farmers, State institutions, and Federal agencies.

Consequently, as rapidly as soil conservation districts are formed in the various States, the Service, in cooperation with the State committees, will place primary emphasis upon the principle of cooperation with large groups of farmers legally organized under State law, whose holdings and operations represent all land within a complete watershed or natural land-use area, and who are cooperatively engaged in the prevention of soil wastage on a large scale.

This does not mean that the demonstration program is to be abandoned, or that the principle of demonstration is to be ignored as the Service prepares to assist districts. The projects and camp areas already in operation, and individual demonstration farms established in cooperation with the Extension Service, together with a few new demonstration units to be established in the future, will become increasingly necessary to provide a background of substantial experience in planning and applying control measures within the districts, and to serve as proving grounds where measures and practices can be applied and studied under conditions peculiar to each natural area.

In accordance with the policy of the Department of Agriculture, new watershed demonstration projects are being established at present only in those States that have passed adequate soil-conservation district laws. Exceptions to this policy are found, of course, in those States in which the legislatures have not had an opportunity to consider such legislation, and in those States in which the Service has not previously established watershed demonstration projects.

Where demonstration areas are necessary in the future, to provide proving grounds for proper control measures, they will be established in cooperation with soil-conservation districts organized under State acts. Likewise, the services of C. C. C. camp enrollees working under the technical supervision of the Service will be provided in the future in accordance with this same principle, insofar as feasible.

¹ Chief, Division of Cooperative Relations and Planning, Soil Conservation Service, Washington, D. C.



Peace comes to a land where grass both nurtures the kine and shields the soil.

With respect to the exact manner in which the Service may cooperate with districts, numerous specific questions arise which must necessarily remain unanswered until a background of experience has been acquired. In general, however, the Service is prepared to provide, insofar as available funds and resources permit, the following principal types of assistance:

1. Technical personnel to assist the districts in making necessary conservation surveys, in formulating district soil conservation programs, and in preparing conservation plans for individual farms within the districts. Such personnel will also be available to supervise the adoption of individual farm plans and assist in making necessary revisions and performance checks on the plans being adopted. Transportation, and necessary equipment for the technical staff, together with clerical and other office help to serve the needs of the technical staff may also be supplied.

2. A limited supply of new or uncommon varieties of erosion-resistant plants to be used for purposes of demonstration only.

3. A small amount of funds, where justified and available, but not in excess of a small proportion of the total assistance rendered by the Service. Such funds will be supplied on the basis of the needs of the district, and only when matched by an equal sum provided by the district. Monetary grants of this nature may be used by the districts for securing materials, supplies, equipment, etc., subject to approval by the Service. Under certain conditions, available equipment may be provided instead of funds.

While assistance of the types enumerated may apparently be given to the districts without encountering undue difficulty, it may be well to explain more fully the attitude of the Service toward monetary grants to districts.

In the past, Service contributions to individual farmers in the form of materials, supplies, and labor, have led to certain problems which it is hoped to circumvent in the future. For example, in some cases cooperating farmers have been prone to regard such contributions as inducements and have treated them as such with little regard for the terms under which they were advanced. By centering responsibility for the procurement and distribution of such materials, supplies, and equipment largely in the hands of various districts, it is believed that this difficulty will be overcome in a large measure.

Too, Federal procurement on a large scale necessarily involves important and essential regulations and procedures. A staff adequate to handle requisitions, records of accountability, and other administrative detail, would be both large and costly.

Consequently, it seems that some types of services can be provided on a much sounder basis and at less cost to the Service, through small conditional grants in funds. In all cases, the expenditure of such grants should be restricted to those things which cannot readily be supplied by the districts and which will represent a real contribution to the public welfare.

Service cooperation with districts must be governed in all cases by specific provisions written into a memorandum of agreement, or understanding, between the districts and the Service, under which each district will be required, as a prerequisite to Service cooperation and assistance, to provide all materials, equipment, supplies, office and warehouse space, and labor, essential to the development of a sound program but not furnished by the Service or other agencies.

Until the Service has determined by experience the wisest manner in which cooperation may be extended to the districts, Service obligations under each memorandum of agreement, or understanding, necessarily will be subject to certain restrictions. It seems probable that such agreements will need considerable modification and revision after a period of time, and of course, from year to year, contingent upon the action of Congress. This fact, necessarily, will have to be fully understood by the districts before Service cooperation can take tangible form.

The foregoing serves to outline in a general way the kinds of active assistance which the Service is prepared to give to districts. However, before tangible aid of any kind can be extended, the various districts must first request such assistance, and be adequately prepared to utilize it to best advantage when advanced.

■■■ A VEHICLE FOR EROSION CONTROL ■■■

The districts have the power to enact and enforce local land-use regulations if such action appears necessary. Ordinances relating to land use may be presented by the supervisors, but must be voted upon favorably by the people before they can be enacted.

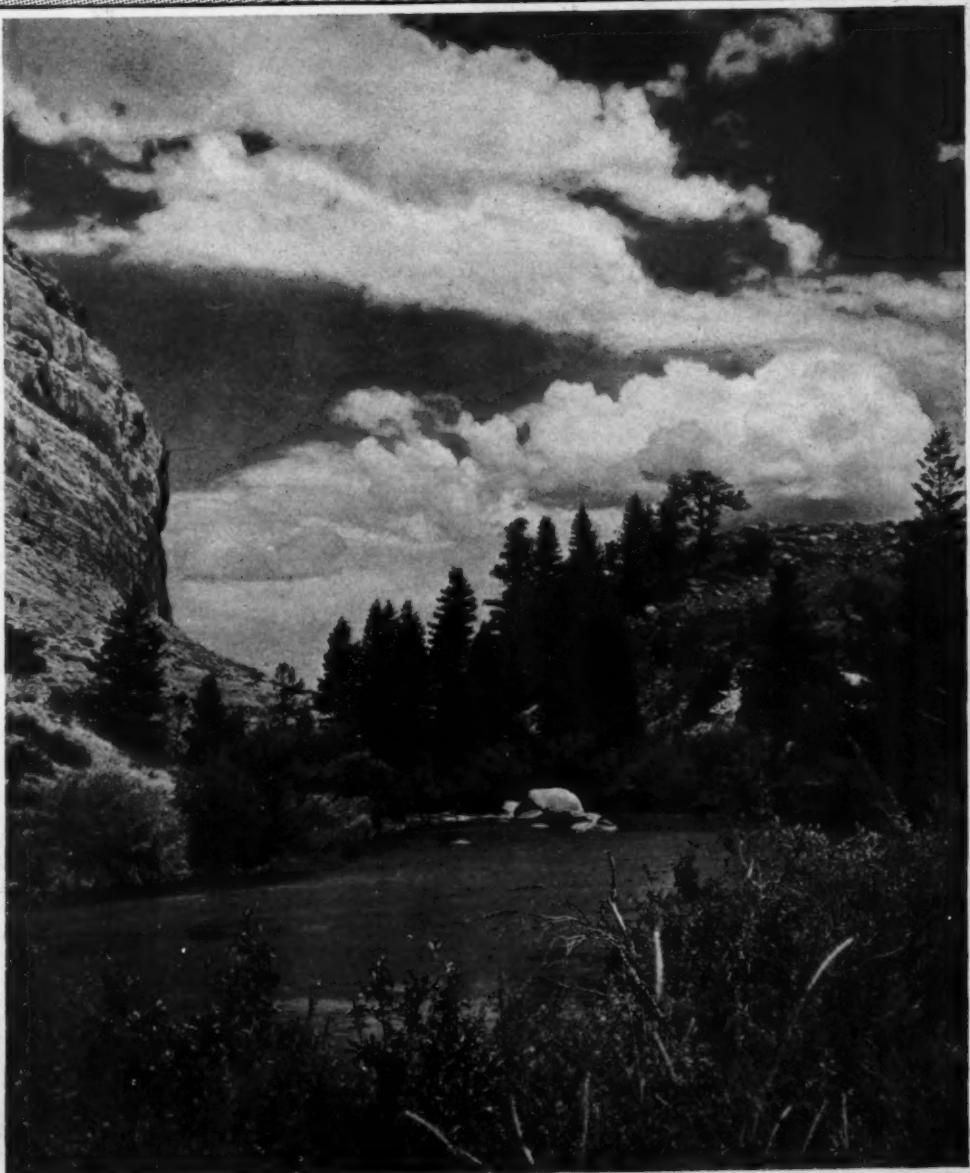
In the early stages of development, it seems desirable from a soil conservation viewpoint that efforts be first directed toward the organization and development of a sound operations program in the districts on a voluntary basis. Moreover, in many instances insufficient information and knowledge are available to assist the districts in formulating adequate regulations, and consequently such regulations in the early stages of development would likely be of questionable standard from which later deviation might be difficult. There may, and probably will be exceptions, where regulations are needed and enacted soon after a district is organized. In general, however, land-use regulations will be new to most farmers and probably should be developed by them as the need becomes evident, rather than abruptly.

In addition to active operations assistance, the research division of the Service, working in close cooperation with the Agricultural Experiment Stations and other bureaus of the Department, will doubtless be of valuable assistance to the soil conservation districts by continually testing erosion-control measures and developing new conservation methods and practices. An adequate program of research is essential to the proper development of a national soil-and-water conservation program and must be maintained to provide a sound foundation for the individual district programs.

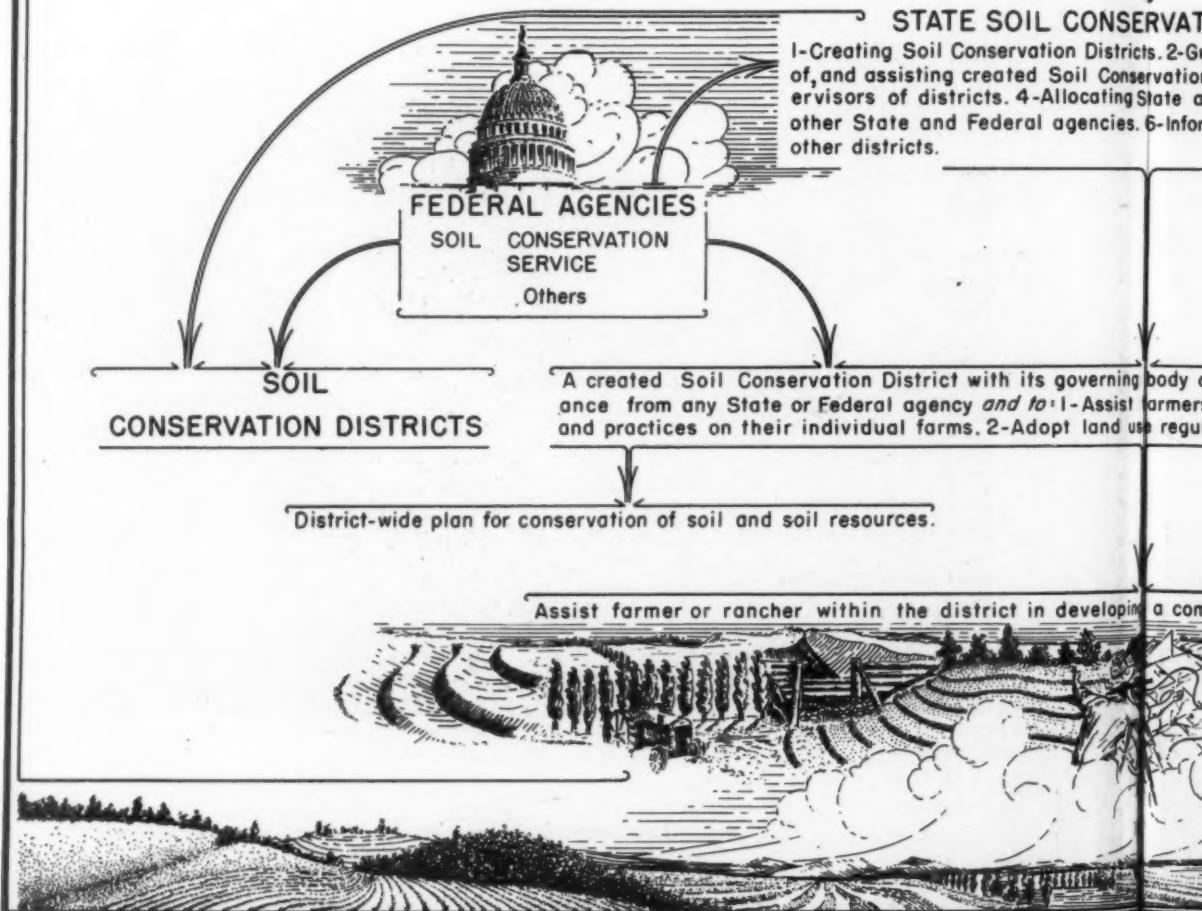
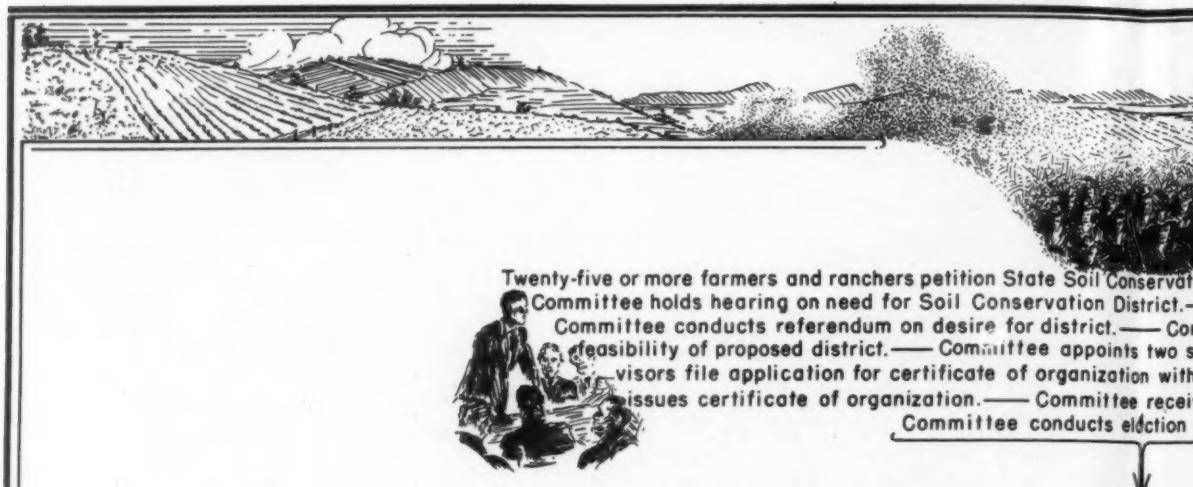
Current developments in this field, together with services of an educational and informative nature, will be made available to the districts through close cooperation with the Agricultural Extension Service.

In the final analysis, soil-conserving measures and practices, when applied where needed to the lands of private individuals, result in eventual benefit both to the general public and to the private landowner or operator. The Federal Government cannot be expected to bear an unjustifiable percentage of the cost of erosion-control work on private lands. Yet, when such work is necessary in the interests of the general welfare, it is incumbent upon the Government to provide active leadership and sufficient assistance to get the work done.

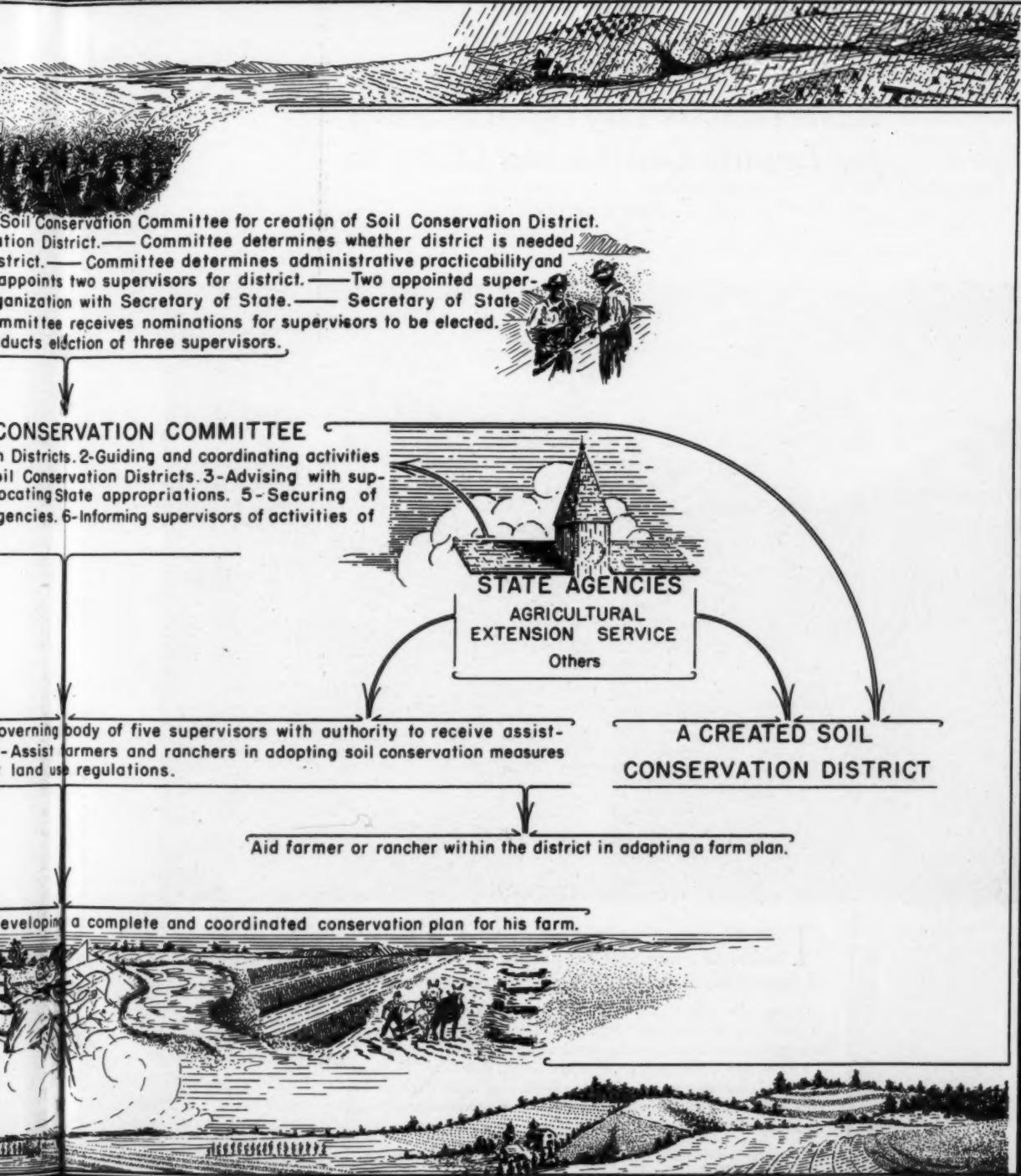
Soil conservation districts, vested with legal responsibility, and the power and ability to exercise a thoroughly democratic control over local land use in the interest of the community as a whole, apparently represent an admirable mechanism through which the individual farmer, the States, and the Federal Government, can cooperate on a basis equitable to all.



Nature sets an example in worthy soil stewardship.



— A VEHICLE FOR EROSION CONTROL —



Associations Lay Groundwork for Legally-Constituted Districts

By J. Phil Campbell¹



THE Report on Soil Conservation Work by the inter-bureau committee, approved June 6, 1935, by the Secretary of Agriculture, set forth the following recommendation:

On and after July 1, 1937 . . . all erosion control work on private lands . . . be undertaken by the Soil Conservation Service only through legally constituted soil conservation associations or governmental agencies . . .

Prior to July 1, 1937, new ECW erosion control projects on private lands outside of demonstration areas if not handled through legally constituted soil-conservation associations be undertaken only through voluntary soil-conservation associations . . .

¹ In Charge, Section of Cooperative Relations and Extension, Soil Conservation Service, Washington, D. C.

The committee further stated that—

We believe the Federal Government cannot manage erosion-control operations effectively with hundreds of thousands of individual farmers, but that local group responsibility will have to be obtained through the organization of cooperative control associations or governmental agencies . . .

Following the committee report, voluntary soil-conservation associations were organized by State Extension Services and the Soil Conservation Service in connection with approximately 500 demonstration projects and ECW camp areas. More than 100 associations were organized outside project and camp areas. Many associations in connection with projects and camps have functioned acceptably and helped to lay the ground-work for legally constituted soil-conservation districts.



Valuable educational work has been carried on in connection with associations regarding practical measures for erosion control which farmers are now putting into operation with the proper technical assistance and guidance. The quality of work accomplished by successful associations has depended to a large degree upon the adoption of a soil-conservation program which delegates definite duties and responsibilities to the board of directors and various committees of the associations.

The leadership and interest shown on the part of the Extension Service, and the cooperation given by the Soil Conservation Service workers have been the main contributing factors to the successful operation of associations. Well-planned educational meetings, tours, field days, and other activities of interest to the membership help to make the educational work of the association worth while.

Many associations have found an opportunity for service by incorporating under State laws for the purpose of handling purchases and for the operation of terracing machinery and lime-grinding equipment for the membership. Some associations outside project and camp areas, where technical services were available, have been very active in supporting the members in the approach to erosion-control operations on their individual farms. Technical advice to individual farmers outside camp and project areas should be directed toward the conducting of demonstration farms in cooperation with members of active soil-conservation associations. The successful operations of active associations are a challenge not only to inactive



associations, but to the Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service—the organizations responsible for their existence.

The associations that have functioned properly are pointing a way for others. If an effective, coordinated program of soil and water conservation is to be set up, certain definite responsibilities must be assumed not only by individual farmers, but by organized groups of farmers as well.

By agreement between the State Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service, it is a definite responsibility of the farmer to promote the necessary soil-conservation educational work with the assistance, when called upon, of the Soil Conservation Service. The leadership of such a program should rest with the extension soil conservationist or some leader designated by the Extension Service.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the State Extension Services and the Soil Conservation Service provides for the organization of farmers into soil-conservation associations. The active association is the vehicle through which the programs in education and erosion-control operations are conducted within the area served by the association.

Purposes of Association

The main purposes of the association as stated in the Articles of Association are (1) to acquire and disseminate facts and information concerning the character of soil erosion by wind and water, the effects of such erosion including rainfall run-off, floods, reservoir silting, and soil blowing, and the character of the preventive and control measures needed; (2) to promote the cooperation of all residents in the geographical area covered by the association, in a concerted and intelligent effort to prevent and control soil erosion and the wastage of soil and moisture; (3) to bring about widespread adoption of accepted erosion-control and erosion-prevention practices.



The bylaws provide for setting up the necessary committees, one of which is composed of the board of directors of the association and designated representatives of the Soil Conservation Service, the Extension



Service, and other cooperating agencies. This is known as the Local Soil Conservation Committee and develops local land-use policies and principles of local farm management, in accordance with a general State and national program of soil conservation and erosion prevention.

The Committee on Promotion of Membership, Agreements and Cooperation is generally composed of the strongest members of the association. This committee serves to promote a membership among land-owners and farm operators in the territory of the association, and particularly seeks their active cooperation in making agreements with the group of supervisors and in giving other aid to the soil-conservation program.

The Committee on Farm Management studies the application of new methods of farm management practices as related to effective erosion control and aids in adapting such practices to local conditions. As an example, this committee studies the application of strip-cropping methods, concerning which a minimum of research data is available and, at the same time, a very large amount of information from practical experi-



ence is to be accumulated through consultation with the local farmers. Pasture management and grazing control are other matters of interest. This committee, through the county agent, is able to secure the assistance of extension specialists in making studies and adjusting plans in the maintenance programs.

In those States where the association is incorporated and operates terracing or lime-grinding equipment, a business committee is appointed to organize cooperative use of equipment, and particularly in connection with the amortization payments. The association president and treasurer should be members of this committee, and the latter should keep all accounts and records, make purchases, collect all funds in connection with the work done, and pay such funds to the proper agencies. If desired, provision is made for legal bond. Likewise, it organizes association activities for the purchasing of lime, seed, and other materials where such are needed in furtherance of erosion-control work.

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The Forestry Committee is appointed to cooperate with the State Forester, State Extension Forester, and local forestry workers for promotion of sound forest care and use. This refers particularly to organizing work for the protection of woodlands from fire, diseases, insects, grazing, etc., and to cooperative marketing of woodland products, promotion of community forests, and similar concrete activities designed to bring about an integration of forest management practice with farm management.

The Committee on Recreation and Wildlife contacts the proper representatives of the State Conservation Department and cooperates with local sportsmen, hunting clubs, and others, for the promotion of an understanding and interest in wildlife, fish conserva-



tion, and recreation generally. Roadside Planting is furthered by this committee as an aid to attracting tourists and summer visitors, thus adding to the community income as well as to community pride of achievement in successful erosion-control operations.

The Compliance Committee assists in checking co-operator compliance and assists in education of the membership in proper carrying out of the terms of the agreement. Additional committees are formed as needs arise.

Cooperation Between Associations and Districts

Now that 22 States have soil-conservation district laws, the question naturally arises as to the need for local associations of farmers in connection with the districts. Associations in some States have been active in securing the passage of such laws, and in some instances have furnished funds for use by the State soil-conservation committees in the organization of legal



districts. Considering the successful experience of some associations, it is believed that they can render a service to the supervisors of a district. In a district set-up a group of five supervisors constitutes the governing body. This group of five individuals, without salary status and in many cases with no means for reimbursement of expenses, will be limited to making

(Continued on p. 137)



The First District: North Carolina Leads the Way

By I. O. Schaub¹

*Planned farming
supports prosperous
villages and towns.*

AUGUST 4, 1937, constitutes a red letter day in the agricultural history of North Carolina. On that date the Secretary of State issued a certificate setting up the Brown Creek Soil Conservation District as a governmental subdivision. This is the first unit of its kind in the United States.

¹ Director of Extension, State College of Agriculture and Engineering, University of North Carolina, State College Station, Raleigh, N. C.

All the watershed of Brown Creek lying within Anson and Union Counties is included. The district has authority to assist farmers in adopting soil-conservation measures and practices, and the right to prescribe such land-use regulations as may be required to make them effective.

The farm agent of Anson County, J. W. Cameron, was a prime mover in bringing about organization of this district. W. D. Lee, cooperative specialist in soil conservation, assisted the State committee in its creation.

The Brown Creek soil conservation district is essentially a cooperative association of landowners. It is a self-help organization engaging in human as well as material conservation. Since the operation of such a program can be truly effective only when enjoying the whole-hearted support of land operators, each step in the setting up of the district has been by a process of petition and referendum. Control and direction come from the people themselves.

The Brown Creek soil-conservation district was established under an act passed by the 1937 General Assembly, known as the soil conservation districts law. Based upon a standard State soil conservation districts law suggested by the United States Department of Agriculture, the act was enacted to obtain such advantages as might be extended to the State under Public 46 passed by Congress April 27, 1935. Before going to the legislature the proposed bill was studied carefully by the research division of State College. Revised and approved, it was given the sponsorship of a group of interested farm owners and leaders. This group eliminated certain features of the standard act, suggested certain modifications to make it comply with the North Carolina Constitution, and saw the act given legislative approval March 22, 1937.

The soil conservation districts law established a State soil conservation committee, or central board of directors. The committee is composed of the Director of Extension, the Director of Experiment Station, and the State Forester. There is provision also for the appointment of a member by the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture. This group charts the State-wide program, assists in setting up districts, coordinates the work of different districts, and disseminates information relative to the program.

Late in May a petition signed by 30 landowners of the Brown Creek area was filed with the State committee, setting forth the need for the establishment of the district and requesting the committee to define the district boundaries.

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Acting upon this petition, the committee defined the boundaries and announced a public hearing to determine the need for the proposed district.

Notice of a referendum was published twice in a local paper, as directed by law. Each landowner was notified by mail. Several small meetings were held in or near the proposed district, culminating in a general hearing at Wadesboro, the county seat. A referendum was held. Out of approximately 385 landowners, some 300 voted in favor of establishing the district; there was but one dissenting vote.

Following the referendum, a State committee determined that the operation of the proposed district was "administratively practicable and feasible" and appointed as supervisors W. Henry Liles and R. B. Medley. These men filed application for the certificate of organization of the Brown Creek soil conservation district. This document, as observed at the beginning of this article, was issued by the Secretary of State on August 4.

The next step was the election of three additional supervisors. In keeping with the law, several nominating petitions, each supported by at least 25 signers, were filed with the State committee. A referendum was conducted by mail and the three nominees polling the highest number of votes took office as supervisors along with the two appointees of the State committee. The five supervisors comprise the governing body of the district. In this election all qualified voters were permitted to participate.

The supervisors serve without pay. It is interesting to note that three of them are actual farmers, one is a banker-farmer, and one is a merchant-farmer. Each owns and operates one or more farms.

The supervisors of the Brown Creek soil conservation district has drawn up a plan of operations for cooperating farmers in the area. The entire district program has been presented to various agencies together with a request for technical assistance. The district's plans and procedures contemplate the development of an integrated program through the cooperation of all the agricultural interests of the district, the State, and the Federal Government.

The Brown Creek soil conservation district has led the way. Other petitions have been received by the State soil conservation committee, seeking the establishment of districts along Little Fishing Creek in Halifax and Warren Counties, and along Tar River in Person, Granville, Vance, and Franklin Counties. Farmers living on other watersheds are getting together to discuss what they may do to comply with the recently enacted statute, and to learn of the opportunities which it extends.

A conservation district will leave this ruffed grouse undisturbed on her nest.

Photograph by Alfred O. Gross, Bowdoin College.



Associations Lay Groundwork—Continued from p. 134

administrative decisions rather than constructing a virile enterprise. This group will be dependent upon others for the successful operations of the district. The supervisors will, no doubt, call upon active local associations to assist in planning and operating the district programs in their respective communities.

The district supervisors will be responsible under the law for the formulation and development of district-wide plans for conservation of soil resources and for control and prevention of soil erosion.

In addition to the assistance the supervisors may secure from State and Federal agencies, the advice of community or county committees of farmers should be valuable particularly in the formulation of the district-wide plans and plans and operations of local work areas. These committees will be representative of the farmers—if they are selected by the active associations that may exist within the area. Inactive associations should be revived for this purpose. In communities or counties without associations, such committees should be selected by mass meetings of farmers called for that purpose by the county agent.

In addition to the preparation of working plans for the district, the supervisors will, no doubt, desire the assistance of these committees to determine on the location of the first work areas within the district. When such agreements have been reached, it may be desirable for the community committees to organize

community erosion-control associations to represent the group of supervisors in the conduct of the work within the selected area. All farmers who join the association would naturally become applicants for farm plans for the control of erosion on their individual farms. The association should keep its books open for additional members as other farmers become interested in the program and are ready to put it into effect. The association should be responsible for naming the farms in the order to be served by soil-conservation technicians who will assist farmers in the formulation and installation of farm plans. All work requests should be routed through the board of directors. Generally speaking they should meet once each month to report to the supervisors on the progress of the work. The local association could become the purchasing and operating agency for the supervisors and the farmers within the community. A federation of associations may be desirable as the work is spread, especially over a large district.

Some of the details of functions of the local associations will be covered in the articles of association, but in the bylaws special provisions should be made to carry out the objectives of the articles of association, and especially to furnish a vehicle for effective co-operation between the members of the association and the district supervisors.

Rural Zoning Improves Land Use In Wisconsin



By V. Webster Johnson¹

A FORWARD step in land use planning was taken in 1929 when the Wisconsin Legislature amended a strictly urban county zoning enabling law by adding a section which provides:

That county boards of any county may by ordinance regulate, restrict, and determine the areas within which agriculture, forestry, and recreation may be conducted, the location of roads, schools

Four years later, Oneida County, under the authority granted by this act, enacted the first county zoning ordinance in the United States involving restrictions on the use of rural lands. To date 23 northern and central Wisconsin counties have comprehensive county-wide zoning ordinances in force by which the land is classified into forestry, agricultural, and sometimes recreational use districts. Over 5,000,000 acres of land—much of it subject to serious tax delinquency, scattered settlement, and deterioration of natural resources and most of it cut-over and nonagricultural—have been restricted to further development for agricultural use. Definite progress in changes in agricultural, forest, and recreational uses of land have taken place in the areas zoned in Wisconsin.

Nature of Rural Zoning²

Rural zoning provides a democratic means by which local groups of people may exercise reasonable control over the use of their resources in land. It is but a method of applying control by collective action over the use of land and buildings, public or private, in the interest of the general welfare. Such power may be given to a group of people residing within a unit of local government through the police power of a State—that broad grant of power under which government may impose restrictions upon the use of property in protection of the public health and safety, and in promotion of the public welfare. It is difficult to define concepts dealing with social relationships; in this respect, zoning is no exception. Briefly stated, zoning may be considered as the creation by law of districts in which regulations, differing in different districts, prohibit undesirable structures and uses of land, and restrict individual rights in the interest of the public welfare. Of course, the restrictions must be reasonable; the interests of individuals and those of organ-

ized government need to be in balance. Private property in land does not include a right to destroy it or to use it in such manner as will injure the interests of the community. Stated positively, the ownership of land includes the right of government to exercise reasonable safeguards in the control of its use.

Forces Leading to Rural Zoning

The need for controlling land use in northern Wisconsin was an outgrowth of the economic and social distress which followed an attempt to develop the area for agricultural use. At one time great hopes were held out for agriculture in northern Wisconsin. The agricultural depression dispelled this illusion. Of course, the whole area is not submarginal agriculturally. There are many well-settled communities enjoying at least a fair degree of prosperity. Scattered throughout the nonagricultural areas are small tracts of land suitable for agricultural use on the basis of their physical characteristics, but in view of their size, location in relation to community centers, and inadequate school and road facilities, these lands are unquestionably better suited to forests and recreation than to agriculture.

Chronic tax delinquency, farm abandonment, high local government costs and increasing need for public relief all followed and accompanied the agricultural recession. The need for some control over settlement and the use of land became apparent to economists, sociologists, foresters, and citizens intimately acquainted with conditions in northern Wisconsin. Basically, the problem was one of achieving conservation of resources and protection of prospective settlers. This is the basic objective of rural zoning in Wisconsin.

Local people are neither inclined nor in a position to get very excited over conservation and the individual

¹ Acting Head, Directional Measures Unit, Farm Security Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

² To those interested in the type of land-use regulation provided by the Standard State Soil Conservation District Law, the question may arise as to the zoning possibilities under this law. From an organizational viewpoint it could be used satisfactorily for zoning. Functionally, under the soil conservation law, cultivation may be prevented on highly erodible land and on land where erosion cannot be controlled by other methods. Control may be by individual tracts, while under a zoning law it is difficult to conceive how adequate regulations might be applied to scattered tracts. In areas such as found in parts of the Great Plains, it may be necessary to exercise various degrees of control over intermingled tracts. Under such conditions, the soil conservation law is believed better adapted than a rural zoning law. Of course, in order to control the use of large blocks of land, zoning might well be a valuable supplement to a soil conservation district law or a grazing district law. District zoning as carried on in Wisconsin could not be done under the Standard State Soil Conservation District Law.

■ ■ ■ A VEHICLE FOR EROSION CONTROL ■ ■ ■



Water conservation is an important factor in soil conservation.

life of settlers and squatters on private and public lands unless some benefits accrue to them. Rural zoning did not actually get under way because of the need to conserve resources and protect prospective settlers. As Dr. Wehrwein⁸ of the University of Wisconsin in a recent article wrote, "The excessive and unnecessary costs of schools, roads, and other public services furnished the trigger that set off the zoning movement in northern Wisconsin. As a result of the rush of settlers into the cut-over areas before the World War and the abandonment of farms after the agricultural depression set in, there were many isolated farms throughout this area. Land companies deliberately placed the first settlers as far from established highways as possible, and then helped the farmer call for a road. There was a law on the statute books that was inter-

preted to mean that the town was obliged to build a road to any settler who demanded a highway. If other farmers moved into the same vicinity, no harm was done, but if it did not happen the settler was stranded at the end of the road upon which the town had spent \$1,000 or more to accommodate a single farmer. Other settlers also chose isolated tracts, but joined the rest in demanding schools, roads, and other public services." The immediate objective of zoning was the control over land as a means of preventing and eventually reducing costs for schools, roads, relief, and other public services.

Forest Crop Law Aids Zoning

Zoning in itself is not a cure-all for all maladjustments in land use. The leaders in Wisconsin did not forget the importance of planning a program of adjustment through the use of other measures or combination of measures, among which, the State forest-crop law, a companion measure to zoning, is of special significance. Under this law, private land used for forest production is taxed at a fixed annual rate of 10 cents an acre for a 50-year period and is then subjected to a yield tax of 10 percent of the value of all timber cut

⁸ Wehrwein, G. S. *Rural Zoning and Highways*. Better Roads, January 1936.



from the forest. For county-owned land (practically all tax-reverted lands) entered under the forest-crop law, the State pays 10 cents an acre to the local units of government.

These provisions tend to induce: (1) Private owners to accept zoning restrictions and restore their lands to forest productions and (2) counties to take tax deed to tax-delinquent land and enter it under the forest-crop law. The forest-crop law to an extent makes the zoning law positive by encouraging an alternative use for land in restricted-use districts. The forest-crop law and the zoning law supplement each other in furthering the use of nonagricultural land. The interest of county and town officials in rural zoning was quickened by the forest-crop law, and possible opposition of individual land owners was lessened by providing favorable ground for an alternate use of their land within restricted-use districts.

Preliminary Work to Rural Zoning

Several years before rural zoning ordinances were enacted in Wisconsin, a number of State agencies conducted county studies dealing with such factors as extent of all industries, maps showing land ownership, soils, operating and abandoned farms, farm communities and primary markets, recreational developments, schools, roads, tax delinquency, and the costs of the various functions of local government by minor



political subdivisions. For instance, during the summer of 1930 studies of this type were conducted in Ashland, Forest, Oneida, and Taylor Counties, and circulars were published shortly thereafter. State agencies contributing to these studies were the Wisconsin College of Agriculture, department of agriculture and markets, geological and natural history survey, conservation department, and the State department of public instruction.

A full knowledge of the agricultural, forestry, and recreational developments, the per capita cost of roads, schools, relief, and other public services as related to definite areas, the physical characteristics and the land-use capabilities of a county are important to an understanding of the need for the ordinance. In brief, it is first necessary to determine the land-use problems to

■ ■ ■ A VEHICLE FOR EROSION CONTROL ■ ■ ■

which rural zoning is to apply. In Wisconsin, this work has proved of indispensable value.

Procedure in Enacting Ordinances

Experience in Wisconsin has established a definite procedure for the enactment of zoning ordinances. W. A. Rowlands and F. B. Trenk⁴ of the University of Wisconsin have listed the steps as follows:

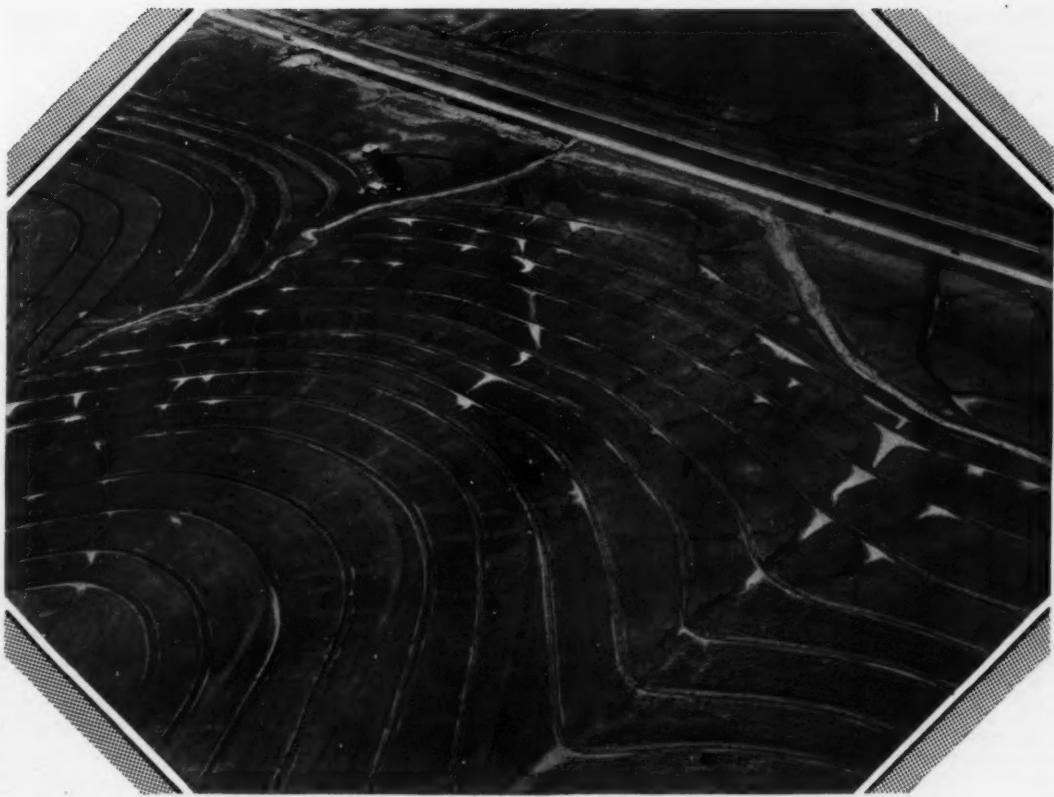
1. County board appoints a committee to prepare and sponsor the zoning ordinance.
2. Preparation of a proposed zoning ordinance and map.
3. A series of preliminary meetings held in the towns.
4. County-wide hearings conducted by zoning committee.
5. Ordinance approved by county board and submitted to town boards.
6. Town board approval of ordinance and map.
7. Final enactment of ordinance by county board.
8. Publication of zoning ordinance and map.
9. Preparation of a record of nonconforming uses of land.



Although the general pattern of the zoning ordinance is established by State law, the county zoning committee has by no means a routine task. The county must be divided into two or three types of districts, the uses established in each district, and the exact district boundaries designated on a map. One of the big jobs of the committee is to explain the need for zoning to the people of the county. In Wisconsin, over 200 educational town meetings have been held by the county zoning committees, with the assistance of representatives from the college of agriculture and the conservation department, for the purpose of presenting reasons for proposing a zoning ordinance, the nature of the restrictions contemplated, and a preliminary map showing the areas considered desirable to zone.

The Wisconsin enabling act provides that the zoning committee shall hold public hearings before submitting its final report to the county board, but no mention is made of holding meetings in each town or a county-wide public hearing. By holding numerous town meetings and a county-wide public hearing—largely extra legal—much has been done to secure the support and respect of citizens and taxpayers throughout the zoned counties. The town meetings have been referred to as a "period of deliberation enabling citizens to better understand the purpose and functions of zoning, and provides an opportunity for the zoning committee to gather sufficient information and knowl-

⁴ Rowlands, W. A., and Trenk, F. B. *Rural Zoning Ordinances in Wisconsin*, Extension Service, Wisconsin College of Agriculture, Circular 281, p. 26.



A preview of agriculture's future pattern. Conservation districts will coordinate terracing operations with other needed soil-saving measures.

edge of local sentiment to enable it to make a full report to the county board."⁵ After zoning is sold to the people at the public hearings, the legal requirements of enacting an ordinance are merely a matter of form.

Results and Problems

Sufficient time has not elapsed since the establishment of rural zoning in Wisconsin to appraise it adequately as a directional measure or to present fully the problems which it faces. The value of the restrictions placed on land use, and the results of directing land settlement by zoning have not been in operation long enough to show the benefits which one would expect to take place as the years go by. Nevertheless, definite strides are already noticeable.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 24.

It is significant that 23 counties have enacted comprehensive rural zoning ordinances, placing under a more productive use over 5,000,000 acres of land by restricting its use to forestry and recreation. This means also that hundreds of families have been prevented from settling on land unsuitable for agriculture. The numerous letters received by county officials from various individuals in regard to the agricultural capabilities of land in restricted areas are striking evidence that without zoning, settlement would have been more haphazard. Zoning has assisted in avoiding the undesirable economic and social conditions usually present in isolated settlements.

Local government costs have been reduced in a number of isolated areas by the prevention of settlement and by the relocation of stranded and isolated settlers. On a large scale, zoning alone cannot be expected to result in an immediate reduction in public

expenditures. Throughout the areas restricted for year-round settlement, however, it does prevent the increase of school, road, and other costs necessitated by additional scattered settlement. There is no way to determine the financial benefits derived, but some idea of the amount of possible increased costs pre-

relocation is a job half done. Rural zoning followed by relocation will make both a success." Isolated settlers are bound to cause unreasonable expense to the town, county, and the State for schools, roads, public health, and possibly relief costs. Other undesirable economic and social costs are usually present.

Lespedeza sericea
waits to help
Southern conserv-
ation districts
control erosion.



vented is shown by the savings resulting from moving settlers from isolated areas. For instance, last year Marinette County, by purchasing the holdings of five settlers residing in a restricted area, was able to close one school. For the school year 1934-35, the school operating cost was \$1,861.30. A substantial number of such savings has taken place in northern Wisconsin as a result of relocation of isolated settlers by exchange of county land acquired by tax deed in an agriculture district for land of isolated settlers in a nonagricultural district, or by the outright purchase of their holdings. The State enabling act provides that the county board may exchange land acquired by tax deed for the purpose of promoting the regulation and restriction of agricultural and forest lands.

It has been said that "relocation without rural zoning is a job never done. Rural zoning without

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The leaders of the zoning movement in Wisconsin realize the economic and social justification of relocating isolated settlers. The justification is not solely in the interest of land use and human adjustments to make immediately more effective the zoning law; there is also a moral obligation to the settlers and the community because of the restrictions imposed by zoning. The fiscal condition of the county is a bar, in most cases, to the relocation of many settlers by them. In the Federal purchase areas of the Resettlement Administration, the holdings of a considerable number of settlers in restricted areas have been purchased or are in the process of being purchased and their occupants relocated.

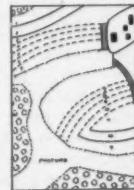
During the last session of the legislature a bill was introduced providing for State purchase of lands of isolated settlers in restricted-use districts where a reduction would result in governmental costs of roads,

schools, and other public services. The bill provides for a settler-relocation fund to be ultimately liquidated and supplanted by a fund from savings in State road and school aids. Although there was apparently little opposition to the bill when it passed the House, the Senate did not take it up because of the rush of business during the closing days of the session. It is anticipated that it will be passed by the next session of the legislature.

Administration of Ordinances

The administration of county zoning ordinances in Wisconsin is solely in the hands of the county officials. Each ordinance provides its own procedure for enforcement. This is a real responsibility. That some of the counties are not adequately enforcing the ordinances

is a known fact, but most of them are meeting the problem with courage and in a manner to be commended. State and even Federal aid in helping to relocate isolated settlers, it is believed, would do much to strengthen the administration and enforcement of rural zoning ordinances, and thus make them more effective as a means to desirable adjustments in land use and for care and protection of settlers against the undesirable economic and social conditions usually found associated with isolated settlement.



SOCIETY AND THE FARMER

(Continued from p. 119)

Realizing our new hopes will be a long-time proposition, and the chances are they will never be fully realized. Let us look on these hopes as guide posts for the future and benchmarks against which we may check progress. As we gain knowledge and experience, the pathway we follow in moving toward our goal will, I am sure, become smoother. The districts legislation, permitting as it does the people of rural areas to gain experience in meeting a common problem in a democratic manner, removes one stumbling block from the path leading to reconstructed farms and a revitalized people. In these two phrases I can sum up all of the philosophy and all of the possibilities which, to me, are contained in the principles underlying the districts legislation.

Regretfully Omitted

Space limitations preclude publication in this issue of several articles of considerable background significance.

As the State soil conservation districts begin to function all over the country, this magazine will endeavor to keep its readers posted.

Regions Pass in Review

The December SOIL CONSERVATION will constitute a veritable parade across the country, with each of the 11 regions of the Service represented by one article chosen because of its unique quality, its regional importance, or its wide potential application.

NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE UNITED STATES. By Richard M. Field. New York. 1936.

Dr. Field, who is associate professor of geology at Princeton University, has given us an outline handbook for convenient ready reference. The classification system is interesting in that resources are listed and described from the standpoint of their relationship with science and human activities and needs. The text and pictorial representations (maps, block diagrams, charts, etc.) set forth a large amount of information regarding the United States—physiography and physical geography; hydrology, treating water resources, precipitation and run-off, droughts and floods, irrigation and drainage, waterways and hydroelectric power; lands, with emphasis on soil resources, agricultural and farm lands, forests, grazing and recreational lands; fuels and minerals.

The book is compiled as a handy aid to students of economic geography and conservation, and with the thought in mind that "it is particularly important that the people of the United States should appreciate the natural resources of their country in order that they may determine how best these resources may be developed and conserved."—Phoebe O'Neill Faris.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

(Continued from third cover)

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Virginia State Planning Board. Land Use and Agriculture (Sections 1 and 2), Tentative Report. Vol. IV-A of Report of Virginia State Planning Board. May 1, 1937. mm. 137 pp. illus.

Wisconsin State Planning Board. A Conservation and Recreation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin. Bulletin 3. Dec. 1936. 28 pp., illus.

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BOOK REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS

By Phoebe O'Neill Faris

PROFITABLE FARMING AND LIFE MANAGEMENT. By Wilbur J. Fraser. Danville, Ill. 1937

Professor Fraser's book was written specifically for the farmer and might have borne the subtitle "A Balance of Farm Factors and a New Rural Era." Certainly there is a message here for the conservationist as well as for all men and women who seek success and happiness in rural communities. It is more or less definitely a corn belt book; it has the "know thyself" philosophy; and it stresses throughout sincerity and appreciation as the guiding powers of worthwhile and economically successful farming. It makes no pretenses of being a technical treatise on agriculture; but it points out in no uncertain terms the fundamentals or factors of the farming enterprise and the importance of improving limiting factors in order to prevent tremendous waste of natural resources.

Find out your weaknesses and rid yourself of them one by one. This is Professor Fraser's prescription for wise planning on the modern farm. If the low factor is too much land or not enough land, a size of acreage readjustment is imperative. Improper drainage and gully erosion, bare fields and sheet erosion, improper tillage or up-and-down-hill cultivation, large herds on small or poor pastures, a cropping system which fails to allow for a continuous supply of plant food elements to all soils, unbalanced feed rations and insufficient or irregular water supply, insanitary housing for stock or storage for forage—these and many other serious defects and faulty farm practices are pointed out and discussed as to their recognition by the farmer as limiting factors to success, and their correction to allow all the fine essentials of production to work together efficiently to increase profit and ensure contentment and well-being.

An interesting and unique feature of the book is the emphasis on grade of individual farmer ability. How can the farmer deter-

mine his class? What should determine the size of farm and extent of operations which a farmer should undertake? What happens to the 40-acre farmer on a 400-acre farm? To the 400-acre farmer on a 100-acre farm? To the 400-acre farmer on a 40-acre farm? The third farmer is successful because "he was intelligent, thoughtful and energetic enough to get all his production factors on the same high level as his own ability where they could operate most efficiently in making profitable production."

In a chapter on raising low factors on the individual farm, the author emphasizes the enormous conservation of natural resources that can be brought about on the 5,000,000 farms in the United States when all farmers realize that successful farm management is an obligation as well as a goal.

Interesting also is the part of the book, covering several chapters, which treats the subject of rational consumption and accumulation of capital in order to raise low factors in production and in life. Herein Professor Fraser urges thrift studies in schools. "A man's economic worth equals what he produces minus what he consumes.

Irrational consumers steal from society." Practical suggestions for farm thrift are pointed out—care of soils, stock, buildings and machinery, production of the money- and health-saving garden, wise buying, saving and investing.

The final 100 pages of the volume are devoted to a discussion of abundant living on the farm and in rural communities. Education for agriculture as a life work, the farm home, the health factor, community recreation, beauty as an inspiration to success, courage, sincerity and simplicity—all these are stressed as essential factors for a worth-while standard of living on the farm, for the good life.

Under a State soil conservation districts law the farmer actually becomes the arbiter of his own destiny. He and his neighbors for the first time have in their possession an adequate instrument of cooperative erosion control on the watersheds.—EDITOR.

Snows that will not lead to floods. Conservation districts will provide means for storing this needed moisture for thirsty crops.

